

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3517

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 4217

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TAGS: UNHCR OCON SREF

1. AT AD HOC MEETING JUNE 5 OF GENEVA PERMREPS OF UNHCR'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN REPORTED ON UNHCR'S ROLE IN COORDINATION OF UN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN CYPRUS; UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO RETURNING REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN ANGOLA, GUINEA-BUSSAU AND MOZAMBIQUE; UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO UPROOTED AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN LAOS AND VIETNAM; EMERGENCY RELIEF OPERATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM; AND ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN. MISSION IS POUCHING DETAILED REPORT ON MEETING; HOWEVER, MUCH OF INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED AND REPORTED BY MISSION.

2. RESPECT UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER REPORTED AS FOLLOWS. QUOTE:

"AS GOVERNMENTS ARE AWARE, SCORES OF THOUSANDS OF VIETNAMESE AND A LARGE NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS LEFT THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN RECENT WEEKS. THEIR ARRIVAL IN MANY COUNTRIES WAS BROUGHT TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S ATTENTION BY THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. WITH A VIEW TO HELPING GOVERNMENTS TO SOLVE THE MANIFOLD PROBLEMS ARISING OUT OF THIS NEW SITUATION, THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS REQUESTED IN RESPECT OF TEMPORARY AND DURABLE ASYLUM,

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CARE AND MAINTENANCE, VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION AND RESETTLEMENT TO

THIRD COUNTRIES.

WITH REGARD TO VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION THE HIGH COMMISSIONER RECEIVED A REQUEST FROM THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM FOR ALL NECESSARY ASSISTANCE IN THIS CONNECTION. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS REQUESTED, INTER ALIA, TO CONTACT, IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER, WHERE NECESSARY, THE COUNTRIES WHERE THE VIETNAMESE ARE AT PRESENT SHELTERED, WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING THEIR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS IS ESTIMATED AT 12,000, OF WHOM 8,000 ARE IN THAILAND AND SMALLER GROUPS IN MALAYSIA AND THE UNITED STATES (INCLUDING UNITED STATES TERRITORIES IN THE PACIFIC). FURTHERMORE, THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE, IN THE BORDER AREAS OF THAILAND, SEVERAL THOUSAND CAMBODIANS NOT HITHERTO IDENTIFIED.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE WHO LEFT SOUTH VIETNAM IS ESTIMATED AT APPROXIMATELY 145,000, OF WHOM 130,000 ARE ON UNITED STATES TERRITORY (INCLUDING PACIFIC ISLANDS) AND SOME 12,000 IN HONG KONG, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND.

FURTHERMORE, SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE, SUCH AS DIPLOMATS AND STUDENTS, WERE RESIDING IN OTHER COUNTRIES, MAINLY ON A TEMPORARY BASIS. THEIR NUMBERS MAY BE ESTIMATED AT NOT LESS THAN 5,000 CAMBODIANS AND 15,000 - 20,000 VIETNAMESE.

AS IN OTHER SITUATIONS IN WHICH LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE LEAVE THEIR COUNTRY, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED VARIES GREATLY FROM CASE TO CASE. THIS IS ALSO TRUE IN RESPECT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND, SPECIFICALLY, OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.

A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE LEFT THEIR COUNTRY WITH FEW, IF ANY, POSSESSIONS AND ARE AT PRESENT DEPRIVED OF ANY SOURCE OF INCOME. THEY REQUIRE, THEREFORE, IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE IN TERMS OF SHELTER, FOOD AND MEDICAL CARE. FURTHER ASSISTANCE WILL BE NEEDED FOR THEIR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, SETTLEMENT IN THE COUNTRY OF FIRST ASYLUM, OR RESETTLEMENT IN A THIRD COUNTRY, WITH THE NECESSARY AID TOWARDS INTEGRATION IN A NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FRAMEWORK.

A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE COUNTRIES MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPHS ABOVE, HAVE GIVEN THE CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE TEMPORARY OR DURABLE ASYLUM, EMERGENCY AID AND ASSISTANCE TOWARDS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION. GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN ASSISTED IN THIS RESPECT BY INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.

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TAL ORGANIZATIONS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, AT THIS STAGE, TO ASSESS WITH ANY DEGREE OF ACCURACY THE VERY CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS MADE, BOTH FROM A FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW, BY GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER BODIES CONCERNED IN DEALING WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE.

AS THIS NEW PROBLEM HAS DEVELOPED MAINLY IN COUNTRIES OR AREAS WHERE UNHCR WAS NOT REPRESENTED, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER GAVE EARLY ATTENTION TO THE STRENGTHENING OF EXISTING UNHCR OFFICES AND TO

THE DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF IN THE AREAS CONCERNED.

IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING NETWORK OF UNHCR REPRESENTATION, WHICH INCLUDES THE UNHCR REGIONAL OFFICE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA IN BANGKOK AND THE UNHCR REGIONAL LIAISON OFFICE IN NEW YORK, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, IN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED, HAS ASSIGNED CHARGES DE MISSION TO MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE. CONSULTATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE TO ESTABLISH TEMPORARY UNHCR OFFICES ALSO IN OTHER AREAS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE FAR EAST.

WITH REGARD TO THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THESE PERSONS ARE TO BE FOUND, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS SET UP A TEMPORARY OFFICE ON THE ISLAND OF GUAM. HE HAS ALSO SENT THREE REPATRIATION LIAISON OFFICERS TO THE MAINLAND OF THE UNITED STATES WHERE THEY WILL BE LOCATED IN THE RECEPTION AREAS ESTABLISHED BY THE AUTHORITIES.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS INTERVENED WITH A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS TO FACILITATE THE GRANTING OF TEMPORARY ASYLUM TO CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE, PENDING THE FINDING OF A MORE DURABLE SOLUTION THROUGH VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, LOCAL SETTLEMENT IN THE COUNTRY CONCERNED, OR RESETTLEMENT IN A THIRD COUNTRY. IN CERTAIN CASES,

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INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 AF-06 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12

NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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AND AT THE SPECIFIC REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER UNDERTOOK TO FINANCE THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE DURING THE PERIOD OF TEMPORARY ASYLUM OR TO CONTRIBUTE IN A SIGNIFICANT MANNER TO THE COSTS OF SUCH CARE AND MAINTENANCE.

UNHCR OFFICES ARE UNDERTAKING A SYSTEMATIC REGISTRATION OF

CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE WHO EXPRESS THE DESIRE TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL. THIS REGISTRATION HAS BEEN STARTED IN GUAM (USA), MALAYSIA, THAILAND AND SINGAPORE. MORE RECENTLY, ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES FOR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION WERE ALSO MADE ON THE MAINLAND OF THE UNITED STATES, WHERE, AS ALREADY MENTIONED, THREE LIAISON OFFICERS WERE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES REGISTERED FOR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION HAS REACHED OVER 2,000 PERSONS AT THE TIME OF WRITING. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THIS NUMBER WILL INCREASE CONSIDERABLY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER IS KEEPING IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE AUTHORITIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM CONCERNING THE MODALITIES OF VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME TO FORECAST WHEN THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PERSONS WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN, NOR HOW PROTRACTED THE REPATRIATION PROCESS IS LIKELY TO BE. IN VIEW OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES AND THE FACT THAT THEY ARE WIDELY SCATTERED, IT MAY BE EXPECTED THAT THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION WILL LAST FOR SOME MONTHS.

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ON 8 MAY 1975, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER DISPATCHED CABLES TO 44 GOVERNMENTS ASKING THEM TO INDICATE WHETHER THEY WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ADMIT FOR DURABLE RESETTLEMENT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE, AND IN THE AFFIRMATIVE TO INFORM UNHCR OF THE NUMBERS WHICH COULD BE ADMITTED. TOWARDS THE END OF MAY, POSITIVE RESPONSES HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM 19 GOVERNMENTS. IN SOME CASES THESE GOVERNMENTS INDICATED A GENERAL READINESS TO ACCEPT CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE. IN OTHERS, A NUMERICAL QUOTA FOR ADMISSION WAS INDICATED, RANGING FROM A FEW FAMILIES TO 3,000 PERSONS.

ON 29 MAY 1975, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER DIRECTED TO THE SAME GOVERNMENTS A SECOND CABLE IN WHICH HE REITERATED HIS REQUEST FOR A LIBERAL ADMISSION FOR DURABLE RESETTLEMENT OF CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE. HE FURTHERMORE STRESSED THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR HIS OFFICE OF THESE NEW ACTIVITIES AND ASKED THE GOVERNMENTS TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING AT THEIR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE A SUBSTANTIAL SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR FOR THIS PURPOSE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER DIRECTED A REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO EIGHT GOVERNMENTS WHICH WERE NOT EXPECTED TO BE IN A POSITION TO ACCEPT IMMIGRANTS, BUT WHICH MIGHT FIND IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION.

MEANWHILE, VARIOUS UNHCR OFFICES HAVE RECEIVED REQUESTS FOR RESETTLEMENT FROM A NUMBER OF CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE. THESE REQUESTS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO POTENTIAL COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION OR ALTERNATIVELY, VISA APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED WITH THE EMBASSIES OR CONSULATES CONCERNED. MEANWHILE, DIRECTIVES HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOR THE SYSTEMATIC REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES FOR RESETTLEMENT BY UNHCR OFFICES, PARTICULARLY IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE THERE ARE CONCENTRATIONS OF CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE WHO

HAVE BEEN GRANTED ONLY TEMPORARY ASYLUM AND WHERE FACILITIES FOR RESETTLEMENT REGISTRATION WERE NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE.

AS REGARDS THE TRAVEL OF THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE NECESSARY VISA, UNHCR HAS, AS IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS, REQUESTED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN MIGRATION (ICEM) IN THE TRANSPORTATION OF THESE PERSONS.

AS THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KNOW, NO PROVISION COULD BE MADE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 1975 PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR THIS NEW SITUATION. IN ORDER TO FINANCE THE VARIOUS MEASURES IMMEDIATELY REQUIRED, CONCERNING ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS, DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER MADE AVAILABLE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS, IN ANTICIPATION

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OF CONTRIBUTIONS, AN AMOUNT OF US 600,000.

THE PROBABLE FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THESE NEW ACTIVITIES ARE STILL BEING ASSESSED AT THE TIME OF WRITING. IT IS ALREADY EVIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE COSTS DURING A PERIOD OF MONTHS FOR SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS IN VARIOUS STAGING AREAS, TRANSPORTATION, INVOLVING FREQUENTLY INTERCONTINENTAL AIR TRAVEL, WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE ARRANGED FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PERSONS, AS WELL AS THE RELATED ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE MAINLY IN AREAS IN WHICH UNHCR WAS NOT HITHERTO REPRESENTED, WILL CALL FOR CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL MEANS IN TERMS OF TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, THEREFORE, WILL BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT THESE NEW ACTIVITIES ONLY IF HE CAN COUNT ON THE FULLEST SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENTS, BOTH IN RESPECT OF ADMISSION OF PEOPLE AND OF SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS. UNQUOTE.

3. FOLLOWING THE HCR'S ORAL REPORT THE USDEL TOOK THE FLOOR AND THANKED HCR FOR HAVING TAKEN INITIATIVE TO STAGE THE SPECIAL AD HOC MEETING AND FOR IMPARTING MUCH INTERESTING AND USEFUL INFORMATION TO INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS. RESPECT REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA, USDEL NOTED UNHCR'S APPEALS TO GOVERNMENTS AND EFFORTS TO DEVELOP RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR REPATRIATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WISHING TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. REGARDING LATTER POINTS, USDEL EXPRESSED REGRET THAT RESULTS TO DATE VERY LIMITED, AND HOPE THAT UNHCR IN COOPERATION WITH ICEM AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WOULD RENEW EFFORTS TO FACILITATE RESETTLEMENT IN THIRD COUNTRIES AND REPATRIATION OF PERSONS DESIRING THOSE SOLUTIONS. IN RESPONDING, HCR ESTIMATED THAT BETWEEN 10-20 PERCENT OF TOTAL CASELOAD WOULD BE REPATRIATED OR RESETTLED IN THIRD COUNTRIES.DALE

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